तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Highlights

• THE MOST GLORIOUS PLACE
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• PROPER OBJECTS FOR ANGER
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

• RADHA KUND AND SHYAMA KUND
From Srila Narahari Chakravarti's **Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara**

• SHELTER OF RADHA KUND
Srila Raghunath Das Goswami's **Rādhākuṇḍāṣṭakam, text 2**

THE MOST GLORIOUS PLACE

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The spiritual world is three fourths of the total creation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and it is the most exalted region. The spiritual world is naturally superior to the material world; however, Mathura and the adjoining areas, although appearing in the material world, are considered superior to the spiritual world because the Supreme Personality of Godhead himself appeared at Mathura. The interior forests of Vrindavan are considered superior to Mathura because of the presence of the twelve forests (*dvādaśa-vana*) such as Talavan, Madhuvan and Bahulavan, which are famous for the various pastimes of the Lord. Thus the interior Vrindavan forest is considered superior to Mathura. But superior to these forests is the divine Govardhana Hill because Krishna lifted Govardhana Hill like an umbrella, raising it with his lotus-like beautiful hand, to protect his associates, the denizens of Vraja, from the torrential rains sent by angry Indra, King of the demigods. It is also at Govardhana Hill that Krishna tends the cows with his cowherd friends, and there also he had his rendezvous with his most beloved Sri Radha and engaged in loving pastimes with her. Radha Kund, at the foot of Govardhana, is superior to all because it is there that love of Krishna overflows. Advanced devotees prefer to reside at Radha Kund because this place is the site of many memories of the eternal loving affairs between Krishna and Radharani (*rati-vilāsa*).

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, madhya-līlā,* it is stated that when Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu first visited the area of Vrajabhumi he could not at first find the location of Radha Kund. This means that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was actually searching for the exact location. Finally he found the holy spot, and there was a small pond there. He took his bath in that small pond and told his devotees that the actual Radha Kund was situated there. Later, Lord Chaitanya's devotees, headed first by the six Goswamis such as Rupa and Raghunath Das, excavated the pond. Presently there is a large lake known as Radha Kund there. Srila Rupa Goswami has given much stress to Radha Kund because of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's desire to find it. Who, then, would give up Radha Kund and try to reside elsewhere? No person with transcendental intelligence would do so. The importance of Radha Kund, however, cannot be realized by other *vaiṣṇava sampradāyas*, nor can persons uninterested in the devotional service of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu understand the spiritual importance and divine nature of Radha Kund. Thus, Radha Kund is mainly worshiped by the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, the followers of Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

— Purport to *Nectar of Instruction*, verse 9.

next column ☞

Proper Objects for Anger

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Question: Is being angry with someone who is malicious toward devotees a part of devotion?

Answer: We have to be angry with one who is malicious toward devotees; that is part of our devotional practice. To do otherwise is improper. But who is malicious to devotees? That concept has to be very clear. Those who do not serve the Supreme Lord, who is the friend of the whole world, who is supremely joyful, and who is in the heart of everyone, cannot do anything good for themselves; rather, they invite danger and inauspiciousness by being malicious toward Krishna and his devotees. Those are the ones who are malicious; we cannot show mercy to them. We have to show our indifference or anger to those who are intoxicatedly absorbed in the worship of *akṛṣṇa* (non-God). But first of all I have to see if I myself am an enemy of the devotees. It is essential to ask, "Am I serving Krishna or am I doing something else in the pretense of devotional service?" "How much love do I have for Krishna?" "Do I want to cheat Krishna?" "Do I want to enjoy what is meant for his enjoyment?"

I see that I, with my body that is greedy for enjoyment, am a great enemy of Krishna and his devotees. Instead of always remembering the lotus feet of Krishna and thinking of his happiness, I am engaged in the search for my own happiness, in gossip and faultfinding. I am not looking at myself at all; I am not seeing my own fault. Therefore, first of all I have to express anger toward myself — I who am such a great enemy of the devotees. I have to show anger toward myself by beating my mind with a pair of shoes. I have to purify myself. I have to try in every way to have an exemplary character and to sincerely serve *hari, guru, vaiṣṇavas*. Only then will I benefit. I have to constantly remember that everyone is serving the Lord; only I could not serve the Lord and I may die at any moment.

First of all, I have to express anger toward my bad tendencies that are unfavorable for devotion, such as my desire for material gain, prestige, and position, and my tendency toward deceitfulness. This way I have to control them. I have to look at my own interest first. Otherwise great danger will come my way. Then I have to express anger toward my friends and relatives, related to my body, who are against guru and Krishna, who want to see me as an enjoyer and thus are attracting me to *māyā*. Only then will I be safe and the highest good will come to me, not otherwise.

— From *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur*. Mandala Publishing House. Eugene, Oregon. 1997. Translated from the Bengali book: *Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta* (Nectar of Srila Prabhupada's Instructions), compiled by Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Mayukha Bhagavata Maharaja. Mayapur. Sri Chaitanya Math, 1990.

Radha Kund and Shyama Kund

From Srila Narahari Chakravarti's
Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara

[Raghava Pandit is speaking to Srinivas Acharya and Narottam Das Thakur:] "See ahead the village named Arita. The pastime Krishna performed here is an enchanting story. Once Krishna killed a demon in the form of a bull [Arishtasura]. Afterwards, when he wanted to touch Radharani, she smilingly told him, 'Even though he was a demon, he had assumed the form of a bull. By killing him you have become contaminated. If you take bath at all the holy places, then you will be relieved of the offense of killing him.'

"Krishna sweetly replied, 'I shall bathe in the water of all the holy places by calling them all here.'

"Speaking these words, he then stomped on the earth and created a depression which immediately filled up with the water of all the holy places. The personification of each holy place also appeared before Krishna, introduced herself, and offered prayers. In front of Radha and the *gopīs*, Krishna then took a bath in the water, while uttering the name of each holy place. He finished his bath some time before midnight. Even now people follow the same system of bathing in the holy *kuṇḍa*.

"Hearing Krishna speak some boastful words, Radha with the help of her *sakhīs* quickly dug her own *kuṇḍa*. The *kuṇḍa* dug by Radharani was most beautiful and the sight of it made Krishna feel very pleased. Radharani thought that she would fill her *kuṇḍa* with waters of the Manasi Ganga, which is the essence of all holy places. Understanding Radha's desire, Krishna gave his order and the holy *tīrthas* entered Radha's *kuṇḍa* from Shyama Kund. The personified holy places then glorified Radharani with

many prayers and, considering themselves fortunate, they became very pleased. From that time on these two *kuṇḍas*, which are surrounded by beautiful trees and plants, became the site of Radha and Krishna's wonderful amorous sports.

"In *Stavāvalī, Vraja-vilāsa*, there is the following description: "I take shelter of the meeting place of Radha Madhava's beloved Radha Kund and Shyama Kund, the site of their amorous sports. It is most charming, being surrounded by kadamba, campaka, beautiful young *aśoka*, mango, *punnāga* [white lotus], and *bakula* trees, as well as *lavaṅga* and *vāsanti* creepers."

"Radha Kund is most beautifully surrounded by the *kuñjās* of the eight *sakhīs* beginning with Lalita's. Shyama Kund is surrounded by the *kuṇḍa*s of the eight *sakhās* beginning with Subala's. They are most beautiful and pleasant to see.

The Glories of Radha Kund and Shyama Kund

"Shyama Kund is also known as Arishta Kund. Whoever bathes in Radha Kund and Shyama Kund gets the same results one achieves by the performance of a *rājasūya* and *aśvamedha-yajña*. This is confirmed in *Ādi-varāha Purāṇa*."

Raghava Pandit said that according to the *Purāṇas* there is no limit to the glories of Radha Kund. In the *Adi-varaha Purāṇa*, *mathura-khaṇḍa*, it is stated that if a devotee of Vishnu offers a lamp to Radha Kund during the month of *Kārtika*, he will be able to see the entire universe.

In *Padma Purāṇa, Kārtika Māhātmya*, it is stated, "Radha Kund is very dear to Sri Hari and is situated near Govardhana Hill. By taking bath in Radha Kund on the eighth day of the waning moon in the month of *Kārtika* [*bahulāṣṭamī*], one can greatly please Lord Hari, who enjoys his pastimes there. This *kuṇḍa* is as dear to Krishna as Radha herself. Amongst all the *gopīs*, she is the dearest to Krishna. It is the duty of the devotees to bathe in the Radha Kund during the month of *Kārtika* and thereafter worship Lord Janardana. This simple worship pleases Krishna as much as one does by worshiping Janardana on the day of *Uthānā-ekādaśī*."

Mahaprabhu Discovers Radha Kund and Shyama Kund

Raghava Pandit told them, "See these two *kuṇḍas*, Radha Kund and Shyama Kund, which are surrounded by beautiful forests and which enchant the sages and demigods. After visiting the other forests of Vrindavan, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came here and sat under this *tamāla* tree. He asked the residents of Arita-gram where the two *kuṇḍas* were, but no one could answer. The *brāhmaṇa* accompanying him from Mathura also did not know.

"Being the omniscient Personality of Godhead, Lord Chaitanya carefully searched and discovered the two *kuṇḍas* in two paddy fields. He joyfully took a bath in whatever little water was there and glorified the *kuṇḍas* in various ways. Then he marked his forehead with mud from the *kuṇḍas*.

"The villagers were startled by his behavior. One of them inquired, 'Where has this *sannyāsī* suddenly come from?' Someone said, 'O brother, by seeing him I cannot understand what is happening in my body.' Another person said, 'He cannot be a mortal *sannyāsī*. Seeing him I cannot explain what is happening in my mind.' Someone else said, 'Who says he is a *sannyāsī*? He is Krishna himself appearing in this dress and form. Just see the proof! Different birds are all coming for his *darśana*. The cuckoos and parrots are happily addressing him as Krishna, and the peacocks are dancing in jubilation. The different sounds of the birds are very pleasing to the ears. And see the wonderful blooming of the trees! O brother, just see the creepers showering flowers on this person, who is disguised as a *sannyāsī*. The deer are coming near him and staring one-pointedly at his face. All the cows are coming running from all sides with raised tails, and they also look at his face. By the tears of ecstasy falling from the eyes of these creatures we can understand that they are meeting him after a long period of time.'

"'O brother, I repeatedly glorify the good fortune of these creatures, who are seeing Krishna in this form and dress. Dear brothers, let us offer obeisances unto the feet of the Lord, who has incarnated to distribute knowledge to the people. By his mercy we can now understand that these two paddy fields known as Kali and Gauri are actually holy *kuṇḍas*.' Speaking like this amongst themselves, they all became maddened by the nectarean sight of Mahaprabhu at this most holy site. Even Lord Brahma cannot describe a fragment of Mahaprabhu's ecstatic expression when he discovered these *kuṇḍas*.

Fulfillment of Das Goswami's Desire

"O Srinivas, presently these paddy fields are seen as two *kuṇḍas* full of water. Please listen while I briefly describe the transformation of the two paddy fields into beautiful *kuṇḍas*.

"One day, Raghunath Das Goswami suddenly considered to himself that if these *kuṇḍas* were filled with water it would be very good. Considering that for this purpose money would be needed, Raghunath Das remained silent. He scolded himself again and again, thinking why he had desired such a thing. Solacing himself, he decided to stay alone and behave cautiously for some time. However, when a devotee desires something; that cannot be denied, for Krishna always fulfills his devotees' desires.

"Meanwhile, one rich person had gone to Badarikashram to get the Lord's *darśana*. He offered Lord Narayan a large sum of money. That night in a dream the Lord ordered the man, 'Take this money to Arita-grama in Vraja. There you will find the best of the *vaiṣṇavas*, Raghunath Das. Give the money to him in my name. If Raghunath does not agree to take the money, you should remind him about his desire to clean the two *kuṇḍas* for bathing and drinking water.'

"Speaking these words, the Lord disappeared, and that sincere devotee happily came here to Arita-grama. Going before Raghunath Das, he fell to the ground, offered his obeisances, and then gave the money to Raghunath. He explained the instruction given to him by the Lord in his dream. Raghunath became stunned for some time. He then began to praise his fortune and requested the rich man to excavate the two *kuṇḍas* without delay. Hearing this, that fortunate man was filled with ecstasy and proceeded to engage many people for the work. Very soon the *kuṇḍas* were dug out. Now hear why Shyama Kund was dug in an irregular shape.

"Everyone decided that the following day a few old trees on the bank of Shyama Kund should be cut. That night Raghunath had a dream in which King Yudhishthir told him, `My brothers and I are living within those trees. Tomorrow morning go to Manasa-pavana-ghata, identify those five trees, and protect them from being cut.' After the dream, Raghunath went early the next morning identified the trees and ordered the people not to cut them. For that reason they were not able to make Shyama Kund square. The two *kuṇḍas* were then filled with clear water and Sri Raghunath became very satisfied."

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SHELTER OF RADHA KUND

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami's Rādhākuṇḍāṣṭakam, text 2

vraja-bhuvi mura-śatroḥ preyasīnāṁ nikāmair
asulabham api tūrṇaṁ prema-kalpa-drumaṁ tvam
janayati hṛdi bhūmau snātur uccaiḥ priyaṁ yat
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me

Very dear and beautiful Radha Kund, that immediately makes a desire tree of pure love sprout in the land of the heart of anyone who bathes there, although this is very difficult to achieve even for the *gopīs*, beloveds of Lord Krishna in Vraja, is my only shelter!

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